

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1, 4, 12 and 15 as follows:

1. (Three Times Amended) An exposure apparatus,
comprising:

an illumination optical system for illuminating an
original with an F₂ excimer laser [ultraviolet light];

a projection optical system for projecting a pattern
of the original onto a substrate to be exposed; and

gas purging means for replacing an inside space,
which accommodates optical components of at least one of said
illumination optical system and said projection optical system,
with a dry gas.

4. (Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 1,
wherein the dry gas [containing substantially no water content]
consists of one of N₂ gas, He gas and dry air.

12. (Twice Amended) An apparatus according to Claim
1 [or 6], further comprising a light source that includes [one of
a KrF excimer laser, an ArF excimer laser and] an F₂ excimer
laser.

15. (Twice Amended) A device manufacturing method,
comprising:

~~illuminating an original with an F₂ excimer laser~~

~~[ultraviolet light] using an illumination optical system;~~

~~projecting, using a projection optical system, a~~

~~pattern of the original onto a substrate to be exposed to~~

~~manufacture a device; and~~

~~replacing, using gas purging means, an inside space,~~

~~which accommodates optical components of at least one of the~~

~~illumination optical system and the projection optical system,~~

~~with a dry gas.~~

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-7, 9, 11, 12, and 14-18 are presented for examination. Claims 1, 6, 9 and 14-18 are independent. Claims 1, 4, 12 and 15 have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicant regards as his invention. No new matter has been added.

Applicant notes with appreciation that Claims 6, 7, 9, 14 and 16-18 have been indicated as being allowable over the art of record. In addition to those claims being allowable,